The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

EDITORS: JOSEPH WOOD and JAMES CROSSLEY.

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The Soul's Parting.

She sat within Life's Banquet Hall at noon,
When word was brought unto her secretly:—
"The Master cometh onwards quickly; soon
Across the Threshold He will call for thee."
Then she rose up to meet Him at the Door,
But turning, courteous, made a farewell brief
To those that sat around. From Care and Grief
She parted first:—"Companions sworn and true
Have ye been ever to me, but for Friends
I knew ye not till later, and did miss
Much solace through that error; let this kiss,
Late known and prized, be taken for amends.
Thou, too, kind, constant Patience, with thy slow,
Sweet counsels aiding me, I did not know
That ye were angels, until ye display'd
Your wings for flight; now bless me." But they said,
"We blest thee long ago."

Then turning unto twain
That stood together, tenderly and oft
She kiss'd them on their foreheads, whispering soft:
"Now we must part; yet leave me not before
Ye see me enter safe within the Door,
Kind bosom-comforters, that by my side
The darkest hour found ever closest bide.
A dark hour waits me, ere for evermore
Night with its heaviness is overpast;
Be with me till I cross the Threshold o'er."
So Faith and Hope stayed by her to the last.

But giving both her hands
To one that stood the nearest:—"Thou and I
May pass together; for the holy bands
God knits on earth are never loosed on high.
Long have I walk'd with Thee; thy name arose
E'en in my sleep, and sweeter than the close
Of music was thy voice; for thou wert sent
To lead me homewards from my banishment
By devious ways, and never hath my heart
Swerved from Thee, though our hands were wrung apart
By spirits sworn to sever us; above
Soon shall I look upon Thee as Thou art."
So she cross'd o'er with Love.

Natural Mythology,

A SERMON PREACHED AFTER A NORWEGIAN HOLIDAY, BY

RICHARD A. ARMSTRONG.

"Praise the Lord from the earth,
Ye dragons and all deeps:
Fire and hail, snow and vapour;
Stormy wind, fulfilling his word:
Mountains and all hills;
Fruitful trees and all cedars:
* * * * * *
Let them praise the name of the Lord;
For his name alone is exalted:
His glory is above the earth and heaven."
Ps. cxlviii., vs. 7, 8, 9, 13.

We sometimes have to pass sharp criticism on those who ascribe to the Old Testament virtues which it does not possess, and ask us to base our creed on its ancient legends, or our conduct on its more sanguinary laws. But it is a more grateful task to point out the wonderful virtues which it does possess, the unparalleled insight of its prophetic rhapsodies in contrast to the mythologies sprung from other soils. The literatures of the further east and the nearer west that grew up in the same centuries with Hebrew prophecy and Jewish psalm seem childish, indeed, beside the sober and stately poetry of the Israelitish seers. In the former, fancy seems to run riot; in the latter, imagination to move gravely, surely towards the shrine of the inner truth. Nature, in her many aspects and her many moods, suggests to Israel but the skill and might, the beneficence—or sometimes, indeed, the wrath—of one great unseen Power, the Living God, who built the mountains and spread out

the waters, who set the stars in their places, and bid the sun to run his race. In Persia, in India, in Greece, in Scandinavia, on the other hand, poet and seer saw a multitude of conflicting powers whose sport or warfare, whose variant characters and moods, made the play of sunshine or of storm on the hillside or the lake, roared in the tempest that felled the forest trees, or whipped the sea into those foaming billows which broke on the mariner's fragile bark. The poet who has given us a text to-day does not call on the stormy wind to shout praise to Thor, and all watery deeps to be loyal to Neptune, and kings and peoples to apportion their homage judiciously among a phalanx of gods, great and small. His cry is to them, one and all, "Praise Jehovah! praise the name of the Lord! for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above the earth and the heaven."

In my holiday ramble this year I was struck again and again by the manner in which the phenomena of nature lent themselves to a natural mythology. We often wonder that rational beings could ever really believe in elves and gnomes, in trolds and witches. Sometimes amid the Scandinavian fjords and tarns and cliffs and crags, this summer, my wonder rather was how the fisherman and the woodman of that countryside had ever put away from them belief in the sprites and fays, whose presence seemed round about one at every turn. And I felt with what power the Gospel of Christ must have been driven home to the bosoms of this peasant-people that the old goblins should have been all dethroned and the love of the One Father or his Christ taken root in their hearts instead. Nor can I feel surprise that in the remoter parts the old house-wife, or the milk-maid, yes, and the house-man, too, should still cherish at nights a prudent dread of Nipen or the tricksy sprite below the lapping wave.

There are so many things there in Norway to nourish the rude old faith.

Here is a mountain-side all covered with tiny birch trees of twisted and stunted growth, save where grim with naked branches, clothed only here and there with rags of his old green garment, stands up—five times their stature—the ancient fir-tree, looking for all the world like a scarred and battered warrior, a viking lording it still in his decrepitude over the thralls that stoop about his feet. Or the rocky slope is scattered with the skeletons of an army that is no more—white and glistening skeletons—not indeed of men—but of primeval fir-trees, the great trunks reft of half their limbs, rotting there caught as they fell between the boulders no man knows how many cycles of winters since. Who can think of them only as logs there in their stately ruin? No, they are monuments of a greatness that was, when the trees stood up and ruled the land. They are gnarled and whitened ghosts, spirits with memories stretching back to the old days long before any summer tourist's foot profaned the mountain paths.

And the broken twigs and roots that lie buried in the velvet moss—what fantastic and contorted forms! The Norwegian carver gives them a touch here and a turn there, and they are living gnomes or trolds, serpents or winged dragons such as peopled the land of yore.

But not only the shapes and lines of rock and timber suggest the old mythologies. You will not travel far before some trivial incident seems to mingle you in the throng of the spirits of the water or the air. The deceptive atmosphere, with its swift alternations of mist and sunshine, lends itself to many an optical illusion, which only the sober sense of the nineteenth century knows to be illusion, not reality. And many a sturdy peasant, from whose breast the belief in the dæmonic denizens of cave or forest has almost faded out, sees of a sudden the elf peeping from behind a tree, or within a few yards of him a shaggy bear shifting in a moment into a woman's form.*

One of our few sweet and placid moonlight nights we were lazily paddling along the shore of a beautiful lake with dark and precipitous cliffs above, when close to our boat, again and again repeated, we heard a gurgling

*I do not pretend to explain the play of light and atmosphere that caused it, but it is a fact that I last summer, in a valley above Ullensvang, on the Hardanger, for some seconds believed myself to be gazing at a great black bear reared erect upon his haunches. After an interval the bear dissolved, and I saw only a peasant woman with her milk-pail on her arm.

sound, as of drowned men striving to speak to us beneath the waters. As we pulled across to the opposite side, without apparent cause or warning one of the ropes that served as rowlocks for the oars broke, and we had to shift to a new position. The nose of the boat was just abreast of the little church upon the bank, when an unseen hand seemed to grasp our keel and turn us from our course. We rowed our hardest, but the boat turned swiftly round to the right, and before we could recover we had drifted back perhaps twenty yards. We pulled level once more with the white church-wall, when the hand was on our keel again, and pull as we would, we were twisted round, this time to the left, and drifted back to where we were before. Three or four times this was repeated ; and we had to make a circuit further out and much further from the church, before we were permitted to pass its gable gleaming in the moonlight and reach the little wooden pier beyond. The gurgling of the drowned men was only the lapping of the water disturbed by our boat in some little hollows in the rock. The breaking of the rope was only from the wear and tear of use. The twisting round of the boat was only from the current of a river hard by combined with the peculiar curves of Norwegian craft. But who that had one lingering shred of belief left in him in a dæmonic water-sprite jealous of the Christian Church, would not have lain him down to sleep that night with the old superstition full-flame in his heart again in spite of all the Christian priests in Scandinavia ?

Or again, on a vast mountain-tarn, nearly level with the great snow-field that lay beyond, we were marking the graceful fall of two white cataracts dropping almost from the blue heavens themselves and lost half-way down the cliff in a black abyss, when suddenly half way down again from the abyss to the level of the tarn shot up into the air brilliant in their flashing light great sheets of blue and purple, green and orange flame, shooting, shifting, rising, falling, against the dark background of rock and pine. Green and orange, blue and purple, the tongues of fire flamed out upon us ravishingly beautiful in their sparkling dance. Who could think otherwise than that in the deep cleft of the cliffs the spirit who ruled the tarn had lit his supernatural fires ? Who could think otherwise than that this was the kindled altar of the forest-god which had blazed there from the old days of Thor and Odin even until now ? The men who felled the timber on that hill-side a thousand years ago, or fished the tarn for trout, would never guess that it was only the rainbow colours struck by the sloping sun-beams from the spray thrown up by the tumbling waters of the foss. For neither water nor spray could the eye discern ; only the mouth of the black chasm filled with the dancing tongues of fire. And I doubt not in the ancient days many a stalwart oarsman has paused in awe before that sight and muttered his incantation to the spirit whose domain he had invaded with his adventurous craft.

So that my wonder was, not how the Northmen in the forgotten days came to believe in sprite and gnome and trold, but how the evangel of the cross had ever persuaded the primeval faith out of the hearts of the Northmen and taught them to believe in the one sole God, to whom alone fire and snow and stormy wind, mountains and hills and fruitful trees are to chant the pæans of their praise.

It was a childish superstition, it is true, that crude and primitive philosophy, which set a different spirit to rule each dell and glade, and crowded the fjord and the mountain-side with goblins and fays, who laid their enchantment on the woodman's axe and the keel of the fisherman's boat. A childish superstition truly ;—yet was it more foolish, think you, than a philosophy which sees in it all no God at all ? They were wrong, those guessers at the mysteries behind the veil. They are all dead now, the tricksy sprites with their whimsical spells ; and they can never live again in the creeds of men. But though wrong in form, those simple thinkers were right in the central essence. It is no explanation to trace the currents of the river under the surface of the lake. It is no explanation to talk of the sun-beams refracted by the drops of spray. All that is only putting the phenomena themselves, the things seen and felt, into other words. All these are not mere dead effects wrought on the revolving wheels of the physical world. There is mind behind them

all—mind, and will, and living power. Not the capricious whims, indeed, of a throng of elves and trolds. Not the sport or battle of an Olympus of contending gods. But the one supreme and dominant Will-power which is never absent where trees bend to the wind or the snow floats down from the hanging clouds. To tell me of crossing currents or refracted sun-rays is only to tell me how God works. It is God that is working still.

Indeed, to a sober mind it would seem inconceivable that there should not be a God behind all this. In all that profuse luxuriance of beauty, shall there be none who loves the beauty, who makes the beauty because he loves it? Why should refracted rays be beautiful? Why should falling cascades be lovely and towering cliffs sublime, unless there be One who makes them so because beauty in itself is a delight and holy? There are stretches of mountain in Norway, probably cataracts of every form of grace and grandeur, which the eye of man never or hardly ever rests upon. Does none take joy in these? The soul of man, as he takes to himself the enchantment of such scenes, is drawn into the companionship of sacred sympathy with One who forms the sheer hills in their majesty and spreads the translucent waters and over-arches all with the dome of azure sky.

There is another form of beauty which is displayed in Norway with a lavish splendour beyond what it attains, I think, in any other European land. I mean the mighty glaciers sloping down from the white snow-fields towards the fjord. What a miracle they are! The waterfall astonishes and enchants by its quivering changes of form and curve, flinging its white arms into a thousand shapes, uniting, dividing, darting, dancing, festooning, circling, curling, till the eye is dazzled and bewildered. The glacier astonishes by its stately steadfastness of form. It is water too, but water arrested in its fall, enchanted into tower and minaret and terraced battlement, piled into pinnacles, carved into caverns, holding the sun-rays imprisoned, or flinging them back blue and purple from its breast. Its motion is perhaps an inch a year, a few feet a century, and the patient mountain bears through the ages its superincumbent weight, and in the long years the torrent tunnels a passage beneath its mass and with the shout of a prisoner released rushes foaming from its base. But that slow grinding of the ice with steps that the æons measure is no less the work of God. This is a slow movement under the hands of the great musician in solemn contrast to the allegro of the streamlets and the rivers.

And so when one turns again to the old Hebrew psalmist after feasting on such spectacles as these, one feels how wise, how true, he was. Science is wise and true with its marvellous marshalling and ordering of all the ways in which the great God works, its analysis of the winged light, its biographies of the ice-fields and the mountains. But there is a wisdom that is wiser yet, and a truth that is deeper still. These are the wisdom and the truth that found voice of old when the singer of an ancient lore not yet worn out, sang:

Praise the Lord from the earth,
Ye dragons and all deeps:
Fire and hail, snow and vapour;
Stormy wind fulfilling his word:
Mountains and all hills;
Fruitful trees and all cedars:
Yes—Kings of the earth and all peoples;
Princes and all judges of the earth:
Both young men and maidens;
Old men and children:
Let them praise the name of the Lord;
For his name alone is exalted:
His glory is above the earth and heaven.

"All Discord, Harmony."

I stood in the belfry, and heard the bells
Ringing their peal, till the old grey tow'r
Seem'd to rock with the noise, and the clanging sounds
Smote on my ear with discordant pow'r.

The next time I heard the pealing bells
I stood far off, on a hill's green side,
And the clanging sounds were music sweet,
Which the breezes wafted far and wide.

And it seem'd to me that those pealing bells
Were types of the wonderful music of life:
We stand so near that naught can be heard
But discordant clamour and noisy strife.

Let us wander away to the green hill of faith,
And list to the sounds as they steal from afar.
From the midst of life's discords, life's harmonies rise,
The Master's grand music, that man cannot mar.

Stepping-Stones.

The profoundest poem in our language,—or perhaps in any language—regarded as a piece of spiritual history and experience, begins with these lines :—

> "I held it truth, with him who sings
> To one clear harp in divers tones,
> That men may rise on stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things."

Now, what are these "stepping-stones of their dead selves?" In general, we may say, they are any part of our life, or experience, which lies back of us in the past, and so is in a sense, dead to the present ; as we say, "Let the dead past bury its dead." All our past experience may be, and ought to be, a series of steps, carrying us higher. This is the "ladder of Saint Augustine," where

> "All common things, each day's events
> That with the hour begin and end,
> Our pleasures and our discontents,
> Are rounds, by which we may ascend."

But, in particular, that phrase means any shock, any trial, any suffering, any wrong, which we have once succeeded in *overcoming and putting under our feet.* We were on a level with it once, or perhaps below its level. It came to us as a burden. It rested on us as a burden. If we choose to keep it hanging to us so;—if we did not choose the effort of grappling with it and getting the better of it, —then it remained as a clog, a burden, a bitter and weary weight, a drag to our spirit. We were crippled, hindered, held down, carried lower by it, as a man swimming in deep water, who carries a useless weight. Put under foot, *the same thing* raises us up and makes us stronger. The "stumbling-block" becomes a "stepping-stone."

No doubt we have all known persons—children, or grown men and women—who seem always to be weakened and discouraged by any such shock as I have spoken of. If it is any personal grief and trouble, they make no effort to grapple with it, or to turn their thought firmly to something else that would give them strength. If it is any fault they are guilty of, their sorrow is weak and empty sorrow, leaving them all the more apt to do just so next time : like a drunkard, who, in his hours of remorse, is most pitiful and abject in his self-humiliation and confession of guilt, but at the next breath of temptation is the more apt to fall.

What is the meaning of that shock, that trouble of conscience, that sharp sense of wrong ?

It is as the sting of frost. It is as the pang of fire. It is as the pinch of poverty. The pain is meant to put us in the attitude, and give us the spirit to resist ! It is by resistance that we are set on the road of recovery. There is a point where the frost benumbs us ; where fire stupifies us; where poverty makes men callous, indolent, and hopeless. But our very business is to stave it off ; never to come to that point ; to keep ourselves sensitive to the sting, open to the pain and the shame, as the condition to a healthy resistance to it and a complete recovery from it.

There are always two ways to take. A man finds himself in debt, for instance ; and for the present he sees no way out of debt. Now he may rack and torment himself—by toil, by self-denial, by all effort an honest man can make—to bring himself clear ; or he may slide along till the pain of the shock is over, and glide on smooth and easy waters into the gulf of insolvency and ruin. He has been tripped up—once, twice—by what seemed harmless indulgence in an appetite or pleasure. He may go on, forget all about it and drift on the smooth broad course to degradation and despair ; or he may meet the thing manfully in the face, and accept his present smart as a heavenly voice of warning. He cannot do both ; and of the two the fatal way is almost sure to be the pleasanter and easier way at first. "For wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The meaning of the moral experience is to put him in an attitude of resistance ; to set the wrong thing he has done so sharply over against the right thing he means to do ; to make the dead past his stepping-stone to a living future.

JOSEPH ALLEN.

The New Cure for Drunkenness.

Many cures for drunkenness have been offered to the public during the last few years, and one and all have gone to the limbo of shams and failures. So that when another infallible remedy is brought before us, the natural attitude of the mind is suspicion. We have seen the hopes of temperance workers so often raised by the well-authenticated cases of the latest medicine, and so often dashed to the ground, that we hesitate to give an opinion, even about the experiments of Dr. Tyson, to which a good many sensible men have pledged their belief, lest the whole thing should turn out another fiasco. But there is this to be said for the alleged NEW CURE, that it has more the appearance of reality than anything yet discovered. Dr. Tyson is an American medical man, who tells us that he has given thirty years of his life to the discovery and preparation of his medicine for drunkenness. He asserts that this drug (the ingredients of which he keeps a secret) creates a feeling of nausea towards alcoholic drinks, restores the appetite, promotes sleep, soothes the nerves, etc., and he claims already to have cured 20,000 American drunkards. The cure has been introduced into England by an agent, who, having got the ear of the leading temperance advocates in Birmingham, persuaded them to form themselves into a committee of investigation. This committee consisted of fourteen well-known public men, one of them being our able friend the Rev. J. C. Street. After consultation the committee selected nine cases of habitual drunkards for treatment. We gather from the report that the treatment of these cases began simultaneously on May 23rd, and that they were all cured by June 14th,—a period of 22 days. From the record of treatment we give the four most striking cases.

No. 1.—Female, aged 35 ; had been a barmaid ; addicted to drink for ten years ; periodical drunken bouts about every fortnight; malt liquors. This patient, to quote her own words after the treatment, was "better in every way; eating well and sleeping well; took a little beer the first three days while under treatment, but nothing since, and had no desire for it."

No. 2.—Male, aged 53 ; manufacturer ; drink crave hereditary ; took whisky, brandy, ale, or, in fact, anything he could get ; for days together took half a gallon of whisky—this fact was proved to the Committee ; had not been sober for ten months and a half, and had been absent from business that time ; had twice suffered from delirium tremens ; had eaten no solid food for a fortnight ; lived on spirits ; had been medically treated without result. When first the treatment began he had just awoke from a drunken sleep. After a few doses be became hungry. The first day he was taking the medicine he had five pints of ale, the second day three pints, and on the third day he sent for a pint, but it was so distasteful that he could not drink it, and he had touched none since. He declared to the Committee that he never felt so free from the desire for drink; his appetite had returned, and he was in everyway a new man. His wife fully bore out the truth of these statements.

No. 7.—Traveller, aged 40. Drink crave hereditary for two or three generations. Very excessive drinker from 15 to 25, then an abstainer for eight or nine years. Now for past six or seven years periodical drinking bouts to great excess. Malt liquors and spirits. On the verge of delirium tremens. After treatment he was enthusiastic in praise of it, felt "more buoyant," "the smell of liquor was obnoxious," his eyesight was clearer, and in every way he was better. Was daily in places where drink was about, but had no craving for it.

No. 9.—Auctioneer, aged 50. For thirty years a heavy and habitual drinker, and a great smoker of cigarettes, swallowing the smoke. Excessively nervous. Malt liquors and whisky. When he tried to abstain the crave for drink was so overpowering that he could do nothing, and in the coldest weather "the sweat poured off" with the intensity of the desire to get drink, until finally he yielded to it. Had frequently taken eight or ten glasses before 10 A.M. After treatment he declared that for the first week he "looked upon the thing as a humbug," but thought he would give it a trial. Did not lose the crave for drink until the twelfth day, but since then

he had gained in every way. The change was marvellous. He had been in the presence of those who were drinking and had smelt the drink, but it only seemed to nauseate him and he never felt so free from the crave. He believed he was cured and should never touch it again.

These, no doubt, are very striking instances, the genuineness of every case is vouched for by the committee, whose names alone are a sufficient guarantee of good faith.

But the best of men are liable to be deceived, and on the face of it there are some features of this new cure which, at present, render it difficult of acceptance ; and we will put these features into the question-form, so that our friends may know what to answer, and what are the difficulties that present themselves to sympathetic yet sceptical minds.

I.—Is not the period of 22 days much too short a time for working, or pronouncing on, the cure of a disease of many years' growth ?

II.—Is not the secrecy of the drug an element of suspicion in the case ? Is it not an honourable tradition—an invariable rule, in fact—in the medical profession, to make all discoveries, whether in medicine or surgery, at once public ? And is not the practice followed, (1) that in the light of day the value of the discovery may be fully tested, and (2) that humanity may have the full and free benefit of every advance in skill and knowledge ?

III.—Is it not a fact that a charge of £10 is made in each case for treatment, and what are we to say of an alleged "benefit for humanity" which only the rich can afford, and which is being worked to build up a private fortune ? (20,000 cures in America, means that Dr. Tyson has already netted £200,000 by the discovery.)

IV.—Why is not the "treatment" submitted to the judgment of medical experts ?

There are other questions which present themselves to the mind on which light is needed, but for the moment these will suffice.

Meanwhile it is only justice to ourselves to say that these questions are asked in no carping spirit, but with the sincere desire that they may be satisfactorily met. In spite of many failures we rejoice in every new *bona fide* experiment to find a cure for this terrible scourge. It may be here, as in many other directions, the appointed way of arriving at the truth is by the exhaustion of innumerable errors.

"Tourist Tickets."

"Tourist tickets for North Wales, the Lakes, Scotland, Scarborough, Isle of Man, Ilfracombe, Land's End, &c., &c., issued here." Such are the tantalising words displayed in big type and startling colours, that meet the eye at every railway station. For after all it is only a few who can afford the pleasure of purchasing tourist tickets ; the great majority must remain at home, and let the tantalising advertisements suffice them for a holiday. Excursion trains come and go, but mills and factories go on for ever. August is here, but shops have to be kept open, and spinning and weaving, clicking and nailing, cannot be suspended, though the weather be ever so hot, and the country ever so enticing. Happily, even for the great majority, holidays are more abundant than they used to be. Bank Holidays, much sneered at by the superfine, are a great boon to millions, and cheap travelling has brought the town into the country, after a fashion that was quite impossible to the artisan of fifty years ago. And if a "tourist ticket" is out of the question, a three or five days' trip to Llandudno is within the range of possibilities. It is, in fact, cheap travel which has created the tourist ticket class. Until the spread of the railway system, the shopkeeper and clerk no more thought of taking an annual holiday than the artisan or labourer. Twice or thrice in his lifetime the respectable tradesman might visit the nearest seaside town, but it was an event long looked forward to, and when accomplished, remembered and spoken of with as much awe and wonder as a "globe-trotter" would now speak of a journey round the world. Amid the many changes introduced by steam the annual holiday is not one of the least. If steam presses upon us for eleven months of the year to make life harder, quicker, more intense,

more active, it at least enables us to escape for one month from the noise, and whirl, and worry of business, into the quiet and solitudes of nature. Many a man finds it to be a sustaining thought in the drive and stress of life that if he only lives long enough he must drift into August. For with August comes a lull in the mighty clatter of the machinery of life, and he goes forth to play with his children on the sands, or to renew the springs of life, health, and cheerfulness by a walking tour. To a lover of his kind the tourist ticket office is a capital place for observing human nature. Here is a pale and tired schoolmaster demanding a ticket for the remotest corner he can find in Wales, where he may forget the noise of lessons, and the care of troublesome boys, and turn his back on "gerunds" and "equations" and "problems," while he dangles a line in a trout-stream. Here is an alderman, with an honest Saxon face, followed by every member of a big family, the nurse bringing up the rear of the procession with the last baby, his wife, a little thin and worn, but leaning confidently on his arm, in the assurance that for one month she and the children will have him all to themselves. Here is a weary looking woman, who seems to have gone through a long process of "fretting herself to fiddlestrings" by a gratuitous habit of what is called "worriting." She undertakes the management of her party, orders round her husband, scolds the children, domineers over the porter, and all with the air of one who is much injured. Tourist tickets bring no comfort to such a woman. All the time she is away she will be anxiously wondering what is going on at home. The cistern will overflow, or the gas will leak, or the cat will die of starvation, or the servant in charge will be entertaining her followers. Where shall the suggestions of alarm and anxiety terminate? Only when poor, harassed, and harassing mater-familias drives up to her own door, after first casting one earnest glance to make sure the house is still standing, runs up and all over it, and finds everything all right, do her fears subside, and then, alas! new ones will begin to possess her. But it is sad to think how many tourist tickets fail of their mission because the holders do not resolutely leave behind them cares and worries. If we must take these with us we may as well stay at home and save our money. For the use of a holiday is to change the mental as well as the material atmosphere, and to run the mind in new directions. The tradesman who takes his ledgers with him, and the housekeeper who cannot leave behind her household anxieties, do not understand the first principle of holiday making. It is in the doing something we do not generally do, in the reversing the order of our proceedings, in forgetting the accustomed, and pursuing the the unaccustomed, that the essence of a holiday is to be found. He who spends his days over ledgers should even forget the multiplication table in the month of August. The needlewoman should not take a little "fancy-work" with her to while away the time on the beach; she should take "Alice in Wonderland," with "The Water Babies." The philosopher should not take with him that new volume of SPENCER, or SEDGWICK; he should be engaged to build castles in the sand with the little toy in white muslin, or blue serge, not exceeding five years old, who works away with such a will at her digging, and looks up with a face like a Jacqueminot rose on a world, whose existence she had forgotten in the absorbing interest of her task. The manufacturer will reap no good from his holiday if he cannot banish from his mind "patterns and prices." Of course, provision should be made for wet days and dark evenings, but let it be something different from the usual tasks of life. What exquisite, fastidious works there are, which in order to be thoroughly enjoyed, demand a mind at ease and leisure. It is useless for a physician to try and read "Comus" in his carriage. FREEMAN'S "Norman Conquest" might as well not be read at all as read at night with a mind continually turning aside to the day's vexations and annoyances. Every tourist should put into his bag some author with whom to make serious and delightful acquaintance during the holiday. He will come back not only with vivid memories of rugged mountains and peaceful waters, but conscious that his whole intellectual life has been quickened and stimulated. Our contemporary, *The Spectator*,

has just told us that one reason why holidays so often fail of their purpose is that people take with them no genuine holiday work. That is perfectly true, only it must be work entirely out of the grooves and ruts of a man's business. Hence the vast benefit which arises from "hobbies." The ironmonger, who is a bit of a geologist; the surgeon, who loves to dabble in water colours—these turn a holiday to much more enjoyable account than the man who, when he is not at business, has nothing in life to interest him. The mind has its holiday as well as the body, for it gets turned into a different channel. There is one other element in an enjoyable holiday which may be mentioned—the effort to give a holiday to some poor or sick neighbour. You think that your little ones are not looking so bright and rosy and clear-eyed as they ought, and you take them off to the ever-recuperative sea. But how many parents there are who cannot do this, to whom it is as impossible to take their children to the sea as to the moon, and yet who watch, them week after week, pining in the hot, close town for want of such air, and light, and play of limbs and lungs. How many a poor woman who carries her sick child to the infirmary is told "If the child could be taken into the country, or to the seaside it might survive, but otherwise ——." And the mother takes home this verdict, and tells it to the overworked father, and they sigh and look in each other's faces, and that is all. Nothing can be done, and by-and-by a little coffin comes out of their doors, and all that is left of one, who, if he could have had sweet, fresh air for only a month, would have grown up into a healthy manhood. Few safer, happier ways of doing good and practising benevolence can be found than providing a home in the country for sickly children, where the fresh breezes shall kiss their pale faces into the bloom of health. The cottage convalescent homes that have been established in various parts of the country are doing an admirable work. Would that they were doubled in number. If any of our readers want to add a zest to their own holidays, let them provide a holiday for some poor neighbour's child. The tourist ticket will instantly double its value.

DELTA.

Sir Eldric.

[That clever and versatile writer, Mdme. James Darmesteter, better known in this country as Mary F. Robinson, has just brought out a volume of poems. They are published by Mr. Fisher Unwin in his "Cameo" Series. These poems are full of artistic merit, and a rare personal charm. Our readers can judge of their quality by the delightful specimen we give in "Sir Eldric."]

Sir Eldric rode by field and fen,
To reach the haunts of heathen men,
About the dusk he came unto
A wood of birchen gray,
And on the other side he knew
The heathen country lay.
"'Tis but a night," he sang, "to ride,
And Christ shall reach the other side."

The moon came peering through the trees,
And found him undismayed;
For still he sang his litanies,
And as he rode he prayed.
He looked as young and pure and glad
As ever looked Sir Galahad.

About the middle of the night
He came upon the brink
Of running waters clear and white,
And lighted there to drink.
And as he knelt a hidden foe
Crept from behind and smote him so.

He turned, he felt his heart's blood run;
He sought his enemy;
"And shall I leave my deeds undone,
And die for such as thee?"
And since a knight was either man
They wrestled till the dawn began.

Then in the dim and rustling place,
Amid the thyme and dew,
Idric dealt the stroke of grace,
And sank a-dying too.
And thought upon that other's plight
Who was not sure of Heaven to-night.

He dipped his fingers in his breast;
He sought in vain to rise;
He leaned across his foe at rest,
And murmured, "I baptise!"
When lo! the sun broke overhead;
There, at his side, Himself lay dead!

Poor relations are undeniably irritating—their existence is so uncalled for on our part, and they are almost always very faulty people.

G. Eliot

Scattered Thoughts about Goethe.

The publication of the Maxims and Reflections of Goethe, as translated and selected from the Sprüche in Prosa, by Bailey Saunders, will give many a lover of Goethe the opportunity of taking a book with him upon his summer holiday, capable of supplying endless delight. Even those who have for many years studied these sayings in the original will be glad to compare their solutions of some of the obscure paragraphs with the rendering of the able translator of Schopenhauer.

One thing strikes us in these reflections; the boldness with which a familiar truth is stated as if it were an original discovery of the author's. With artful wisdom Goethe prefaces the collection by saying, "there is nothing worth thinking but it has been thought before; we must only try to think it again." An attraction to Goethe is very beneficial for a young man; it saves him from rash intellectual extremes. His maxims on thought and morals possess the wisdom of an extended and varied life. The "Faust" is a good riddle. When asked by Eckermann for the answer, Goethe said "there is none." Much better than books on the Idea of Faust would be an honest statement of some of the ideas it has suggested. Judged by the standard which exalts a book provocative of thought above one communicative of information, Faust should come very near to supremacy in the literature of this century.

Goethe liked to gather wisdom from real experience. His varied life was a rebellion from mere parchment and an entrance into the actual. Yet Faust's "cursed dungeon room" was not more full of books than Goethe's own library. The tendency of his descriptions of natural scenery is to send readers to Nature herself. He interdicts running away from living Nature to dwell among "fragments of the dead." All book-description, all poetry is something less than the thing described,—than life itself. The one is God's perfect work, the other is man's imperfect thought of it. Books are of little good unless they induce us to go out into Nature and see God's glory for ourselves.

"Up, scholar, and bathe without stint thy breast
In the red glow of the sun rise."

Goethe was able to describe natural scenery with a faithfulness to which every element was beautiful. There is a kind of domestic minuteness in his delineations which properly belongs to one who is at home in his Father's house and is delighted with everything he sees.

Longfellow, in his Hyperion, allows one of his characters to say that we shall find all Goethe's philosophy of life in Horace's beautiful Ode to Thaliarchus. This statement possesses the false show of a half-truth. To Goethe the present was indeed a "mighty goddess;" he often and variedly enough enforces the wisdom of seizing to-day and avoiding enquiry concerning the morrow, but there is much in his writings which is as remote from the paganism of Horace as is the spirit of Thomas à Kempis, whose general philosophy certainly runs no risk of confusion with that of the Ode to Thaliarchus.

Thomas à Kempis says in one place, "Whatever I can desire or imagine for my comfort, I do not look for it here or hereafter, for if I could have all the comforts of this world, and enjoy all its delights, it is certain that they could not last long. Therefore you cannot, O my soul, be fully comforted, nor perfectly refreshed except in God, who is the Comforter of the poor and the defender of the humble. Wait a little, O my soul, wait for the Divine promise, and you shall have abundance of all good things in heaven. If you unduly desire the things which are present, you will lose those which are eternal and heavenly. Use the temporal; desire the eternal." Those are the words of a saint; Goethe with the suggestiveness of a poet teaches the same high lesson in "One and all;"

In God's great work to find our place
Will we with gladness self efface,
  Our weariness thus lose;
No peace can come from passions wild
Or self-desires; but stillness mild
  Our self-surrender woos.

O Soul of All, our minds pervade
That fighting worldly things be made
  Our spirit's highest call;
And noblest teachers gently guide
Our simple natures to His side
  Who made and keeps us all.

To shape again things small and great
And save from cold and rigid state
  Eternal movement stirs;
And what was dead shall now give birth
To active sun and fruitful earth
  For God new forms prefers.

For things must sweep in ample range
From birth to death, through growth and change,
In seeming only, still;
The Everlasting moves in all
And greatest things to nothing fall
By His Almighty Will.

De Quincey's article on "Wilhelm Meister" is nearly the poorest and most malicious piece of criticism on earth. His method is to collect all the objectionable things and represent the work as immoral. The same method would condemn the Bible. The whole moral purpose of the novel is ignored. Perhaps the critic could not detect any. There is nothing in "Wilhelm Meister" which would harm any mind capable of appreciating its lofty doctrine, and probably no other would possess the patience to labour through it. Amid the multitude of new books with which the circulating libraries are crowded it is a great pleasure to go back to a few old ones. Perhaps we could name no three better examples by one author than the "Sprüche in Prosa," "Wilhelm Meister," and "Faust" of Goethe.

H. H. SNELL.

The First Fuchsia in England.

One of the most widespread of exotic garden flowers is the Fuchsia. In Ireland, Devonshire, and the Isle of Man, some kinds form small trees in the open air. The first Fuchsia was illustrated in the *Botanical Magazine*, issued on October 1st, 1789, and the plant was dedicated by Lineaus to Leonard Fuchs, a very celebrated German botanist of the early half of the sixteenth century. Mr. Lee, the founder of the still existing firm of nurserymen at Hammersmith, was the first to obtain and increase this plant for sale, and the traditional account of his good fortune in the matter may interest some of those who now admire the Fuchsia as a popular garden flower.

A hundred years ago, the vineyard nursery garden near Kensington, was as renowned for its rare collection of exotics, as it had been at a still earlier date for its flourishing vineyard, and the good wine made and sold on the premises. One day, a visitor fond of plants called, and was shown all the floral treasures of the place by the proprietor himself. "Ah, Mr. Lee," said the visitor at parting, "I saw a wonderful plant flowering in a cottage window at Wapping, the other day, with drooping crimson flowers, and buds like coral ear-drops, and I have seen nothing so beautiful in your greenhouses to-day."

The great nurseryman was a little piqued at the idea of anything in a window being compared with his choicest hot-house rarities, and curiosity prompted him to make minute inquiries, the result being that he drove down to Wapping the next day, and there, sure enough, in the window of a humble dwelling was the first Fuchsia he had ever seen. Half beside himself with exultation of such a beautiful discovery, he soon introduced himself to the owner of the plant, who told him that her Jack, the sailor, had brought it home with him on his return from South America, and that poor as she was nothing would induce her to part with the plant, or, as she called it, "her keepsake." After some persuasion, however, Mr. Lee induced her to let him take away the plant, and in return emptied his pockets of all the money he had about him (several guineas), at the same time promising that a plant should be returned to her after he had succeeded in increasing it from cuttings or slips. And so from the cottage window at Wapping the first Fuchsia was brought to the aristocratic side of London, and the story spread, and the highest and fairest women in England drove to the great nursery at Hammersmith to see the wonderful prize. And soon afterwards the plant found its way at a high price into the conservatories of the wealthy, and finally came back again into cottage windows and more homely gardens, as we see it now.

The responsibility of tolerance lies with those who have the wider vision.—*G. Eliot.*

Perfect love has a breath of poetry which can exalt the relations of the least instructed human beings.—*G. Eliot.*

I believe it to be quite one of the crowning wickednesses of this age that we have starved and chilled our faculty of indignation.—*Ruskin.*

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

The Tell-tale.

Do you know what a tell-tale is? Perhaps you say "Yes," and think of some sneaking school-fellow who is given to telling tales of his companions behind their backs. You don't think much of a fellow who "splits" on his friends in that way, and in contempt you call him "tell-tale." But the "tell-tale" I am thinking of is quite of another kind. If you have been to a big cricket match, or to an exhibition in London, or to an art gallery, or to the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, you will have had to pass through a kind of gate called a turn-stile, which will only admit one person at a time. And when you have so passed through, you will have heard the click of a spring lever somewhere in the box at the top of the axle of the turn-stile. Now that click was the tongue of the tell-tale, and every time it was heard a number registered itself, so that at the end of the day anybody with the key of the box could ascertain exactly how many people had passed through the turn-stile.

You know what such things are wanted for. It is very sad that they should be wanted at all; very sad that all people are not so true and honest that we could do without this kind of check and automatic account book. But seeing that men are tempted to dishonesty, it is necessary to restrain them and warn them by tell-tales.

Now everyone has such a tell-tale of his own. All the things you do,—all the words you speak,—pass through a kind of inward turn-stile, which gives a sign whereby we may know if they are good or bad, right or wrong. It is not a tell-tale you can see with your eyes, nor can you hear its click with your ears; but it is none the less real. It is conscience, and it is one of the most wonderful things God has given you. Your eye is a very wonderful instrument, holding at one moment hundreds of the stars of heaven in its glance, and detecting so accurately all the various shades of colour with which the love of God has painted the world; but conscience is a more wonderful endowment still. It has the power of detecting the colour of all your thoughts, and feelings, and words, and deeds, as they appear in God's sight, and of letting you know how they look, and so of making you happy and content when you do right, or miserable and ashamed when you do wrong. This conscience has many signs. It hangs out a red flag in the blush which comes on a boy's cheek when he first utters a lie. That is the tell-tale at work. It is seen in the hanging head of guilt, in the furtive look, in the paltry excuse. And it is seen in the clear, brave, innocent look on the face when one is true and honest. Thank God for this tell-tale within us, to help us to be good and happy, to make us ashamed and miserable when we do wrong, and to make us glad and strong when we do right. Conscience is God's whisper, the mind's finger-post, a dog that won't be muzzled, a bee that never stings the wrong person, the still small voice that always speaks of duty.

The Wishing-Well.

Do you know the Wishing-Well,
Where the fairies hid, and hear
Little wishes all may tell,
Only fit for fairies' ear?
Pitter-patter through the glen
Tiny steps unknown to men;
Whisper, whisper very low,—
Fairies are not deaf, you know.

Even in a baby's eyes
Wishes may be seen and sought
Through the little tears that rise
With the wonder of a thought.
Take the darling to the Well:
Hearts may wish ere tongues can tell.
If they smile and stretch their hands,
Sure a fairy understands.

Children's wishes leap to life
Lightly as the insects pass,
Are as many and as rife
As the flowers in the grass.
Fairies never will have done
If they grant them one by one;
Fairies, if you grant them not,
In a moment they're forgot.

Youth, that glitters like a star,
Ah, thy wishes are so sweet!
If they never granted are,
In themselves are incomplete!
Hopes that shine with silver fires,
Noble longings, gay desires,
Floating dreams that rise and fall,
Hearts that have them—you have all.

Ah, my pretty Wishing-Well,
Is it Age must seek thy brink?
Wither'd lips that dare not tell
Unto fairies what they think?
No; for in the pleasant home
Little household fairies come;
Children's hands delight to grant
All that kindly Age can want.

Fairy Well, how fair thou art!
Fair befall thee, Fairy Well!
Yet to any loving heart
I will first my secrets tell!
If we keep our wishes pure,
Love unchangeable and sure,
Faith and patience unforgot,
Fairy Well, we want thee not!

Notes for Sunday School Lessons.

FROM WORDSWORTH.

THE ODE TO DUTY.

LESSON I.

One of the great objects of Teaching is to bring into the clear light of definite thought the moral ideal more or less latent in children's minds. Its vivid perception carries with it obligation. This is Duty:—The obligation to realise our ideal.

The poem—sublime as it is stern—presents (*a*) The fact of Duty and the results attending its working; and then (*b*) a kind of prayer of self-dedication.

A.—The first stanza: 1. In this world amid its darkness of thought and motive and temptation we need guidance. This conscience gives in the sense of Right. Duty is "a light to guide."

2. When we are false to this guidance we need to know it, or we can never do better. This again conscience gives in the sense of Wrong, with the abundant experience of compunction and remorse. Duty is, "a rod to check the erring and reprove."

3. It is sometimes very hard to do right. The consequences seem terrible, and frighten us; or inconvenient and unpleasant, tempting us to infidelity. Then we want some strong conviction to carry us forward. This we have in the sense that Duty is an absolute obligation. It is God's voice. What God requires must be done at all costs because it is Right. We can't get beyond that. The Right must be done, because it *is* Right. So Duty becomes

> "Victory and law
> When empty terrors overawe."

4. The persistent practise of it robs numberless temptations of their power over us. The *habit* of right doing is our great protection in life. George Eliot says, "We prepare ourselves for sudden deeds by the reiterated choice of good or evil which gradually determines character." Duty, then, "sets free" from "vain temptations."

5. This constant obedience means the ever-growing power of goodness in us. Such gathering victory gives us sure peace, and brings us consciously nearer that perfect peace which must come when goodness is completely triumphant.

To be Godlike is to be at peace with ourselves and all mankind. Therefore when all like-minded, attain the same condition, every disharmony (occasioned alone by evil) shall be at an end, and men will love and live for one another. Hatreds, jealousies, wars; selfishness in all its forms, personal and social—with all resulting poverty and crime—will have become impossible. So Duty calms "the weary strife of frail humanity."

THE ODE TO DUTY.

LESSON II.

B.—(*a*) There is an important remark in the note prefixed to the poem as to our general attitude to ourselves and others in view of our obligation to realise the ideal, and the struggle by which it is attained: "We should be rigorous to ourselves and forbearing, if not indulgent, to others, and, if we make comparisons at all it ought to be with those who have morally excelled us."

(*b*) The poet works inward, and what does he discover? We shall find much that he does.

1. A contrast with some who have grown up from childhood living and to reverence Truth. In their youth their's is a glad life which seems naturally and inevitably to follow the lines of Duty. And that indeed is the ideal—a life in which

> "Love is an unerring light,
> And joy its own security."

But he is conscious that it is not yet true of him. In being to himself a guide, in following paths preferred for their pleasantness, he sees that he has made a mistake. He has too blindly reposed his trust. That which we like and desire for its pleasantness is very often far removed from our Duty.

2. The result to the poet and to us is (*a*) Dissatisfaction—

> "Me this unchartered freedom tires;
> I feel the weight of chance desires."

(*b*) A longing for a more settled and reposeful life. This is only possible by obedience to the Divine Law.

3. That law is most beneficent in its workings in Nature. The obedience, though it be

enforced, of the flowers, and stars, and "the most ancient heavens" results in their marvellous order and beauty.

4. It is not otherwise with us when we bring our will into harmony with God's. Convinced of that, beyond a doubt, the poet closes with a self-dedication to duty than which no one can make a loftier or wiser:—

I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy bondman let me live.

A. A. CHARLESWORTH.

Modesty.

A CLASS LESSON FOR GIRLS IN BEHAVIOUR.

(The subjects of social and personal purity, while of immense importance, are admittedly difficult of treatment. The following model lesson has been drawn up by a teacher of great experience, under the direction of a committee of ladies, and is offered as an example of how such subjects may be handled. It appears to us a lesson marked by wisdom, tact, and delicacy).

INTRODUCTION.

Tell the story of Una, making it very simple, and pointing out that as she passed through all kinds of dangers and perils safely because her heart was pure (or in other words because she was a good, simple-minded girl), so girls living now may pass through great temptations and dangers quite safely, and without even knowing of them if they are good and simple-minded (compare dangers of a forest to those of a great city).

MATTER. DEFINITION.—Behaviour means "holding in," and is applied to manners and conduct, because it means holding in a desire to do wrong things. Derived from a Saxon word "behaeben" to hold in.

METHOD.

All well-behaved people are people who hold in check their desires, or wishes to please or gratify themselves, when it is not wise to themselves or right to others to do so.

Point out how uncomfortable the world would be if everyone did just what pleased them, and tell them the story of the "Do as you likes" from Kingsley's "Water Babies," (p. 229) and then their sad end.

1. Why girls should try to behave as older, wiser women tell them.

Tell them that, until they are older, and can understand why they should do certain things and not do others, they must accept rules of good behaviour from older people; or they may grow up in quite the wrong way without knowing it. Just as people who do not know their way about a town may walk miles the wrong way if they refuse to follow directions given to them.

2. Therefore, forwardness with boys is bad, and leads to harm a girl does not understand.

Tell them that rude, rough ways with companions are always bad, and lead to harm, and that forwardness and trying to attract notice and attention from men and boys is a grave and serious fault in a girl.

3. The special beauty of modesty and purity.

Point out that we all attach a special value to white flowers more than to others; and keep them for great occasions, such as christenings, weddings and our friends' graves, because they are pure and unspotted.

4. Further reasons why a girl's nature needs training and holding in; and why she should keep rules of conduct laid down.

If possible, read Mrs. Gatty's "Training and Restraining" (Parables from Nature) and tell them the story of how the wind persuaded the flowers that they did not need support or props, or cutting and pruning; that submission and meek obedience were foolish, and that if he helped them to break free from all rules and restraints they would be much happier: until they decided with his help to get free and grow and do just as they liked; and how he came to help them

5. Value of Protection and Support.

and knocked over the convolvulus pole; and tore away the strips that tied the lily to its stick; and loosed the carnations and broke the rose tree down. And then how the storm followed and the beautiful flowers lay crushed and spoiled in the damp soil; their beauty and purity gone for ever, and rotted and dead on the wet earth, and how the little girl to whom the garden belonged said to her

mother that "now she saw the need of training and restraining and rules."

CONCLUSION.

Suggest that all girls should be willing to submit patiently to their mother's and teacher's rules, though they cannot always understand them; and in dress and manner be simple and quiet. And that three great rules may be learned.

1. That there are great and unknown dangers in not keeping to old-fashioned rules of modesty and decorum (especially in behaviour with boys) and in streets and public places.

2. That it is well to be on the safe side and take advantage of all protection and support from the company and friendship of good women and girls.

3. Never to do or say anything, or let a boy or girl do or say anything to you, which you would not do or say or like them to do or say if your mother or teacher were listening and watching. If the little voice which speaks to your mind says "Mother or teacher would be shocked," be quite sure it is something wrong though you cannot tell why.

Alternatives:—If the story of Una is too advanced the old legend of "Red Riding Hood" might be useful to little children to show the harm that comes of disobedience in talking to and making friends when forbidden, and to illustrate the path of safety.

Also:—Instead of the three rules put, the children might be told how "actions form character," that you sow a habit and reap a character, sow a character and reap a destiny, and therefore their actions, if bold and forward, may lead to a spoiled life.

The love of beauty is an essential part of all healthy human nature, and though it can long co-exist with states of life in many other respects unvirtuous, it is itself wholly good;—the direct adversary of envy, avarice, mean worldly care, and especially cruelty. It entirely perishes where these are wilfully indulged; and the men in whom it has been most strong have always been compassionate, and lovers of justice, and the earliest discerners and declarers of things conducive to the happiness of mankind.—*Ruskin.*

News from the Field.

THE REV. W. MELLOR, formerly Minister at Newhall Hill, is now fully restored to health, and our readers will join with us in wishing him a happy settlement.

THREE items of news have come under our notice since our last issue, which are worth noticing. 1. The rector of a church in Kent lately told his hearers that "those who did not hold with the Church of England religion should go to some distant land, as England was not the place for them." 2. In the neighbouring county of Sussex, a vicar of the Church of England attributes the loss of H.M.S. Victoria to a judgment of God, for certain members of the Royal Family kissing the hand of the Pope, and the holding of a garden party on the Sunday by the Queen. 3. In the town of Banbury several letters appeared in the local newspaper strongly advocating the doctrine of "Eternal Torment in Hell." These are samples of what is going on in many parts of the country. Yet there are people who think that the work of our Unitarian Churches is done! Fortunately we have a Church and a Minister at Banbury, and this attempt to preach the horrible doctrine was promptly met by the Minister at Banbury, by delivering a series of sermons on the subject, which were very fully reported in the local newspapers. The mere presence of our Churches—small and poor though many of them are—is a protest against intolerance, and a source of enlightenment.

SHREWSBURY.—The friends at Shrewsbury celebrated the 103rd Anniversary of their Sunday School on Sunday, July 9th. The Rev. Alexander Gordon, of Manchester, was the preacher. To good congregations Mr. Gordon preached vigorous and impressive sermons.—On the following day the annual out-door gathering of teachers, scholars, and friends, took place at Haughmond Abbey. The weather was gloriously fine, and it is needless to add that everybody enjoyed the meeting.

MIDLAND CHRISTIAN UNION.—We regret to say that the effort to double the income does not meet with that hearty response which was hoped for. Since the meetings in March, only eight new subscriptions, amounting to £7 5s., have been promised, and these all come from one Church. Will not other Churches follow suit, and undertake to increase their subscriptions?

KINGSWOOD.—The Annual Sermons were preached on Sunday, July 2nd, by the Rev. E. Myers, F.G.S., of Shrewsbury. There were good congregations. At the close of the morning service a curious old custom was observed by distributing buns to the children. On July 6th a large social gathering was held to celebrate the Royal Wedding. The old people of the neighbourhood, the Sunday scholars, their parents, and friends, partook of a "bountiful tea" Games followed, and the festivities were brought to a close by an entertainment.

ALCESTER.—Perhaps the most interesting piece of news this month is the following:—On Thursday, July 13th, the building known as the Old Protestant Meeting House, which has been closed for some eleven years, was re-opened for public worship, after having been put in a

proper state of repair. The building, which was erected in 1724, possesses many features of interest, and these have been carefully preserved. As regards size, the chapel is nearly as big as the Oat Street Meeting House at Evesham, and has galleries round three of its walls; the seats are the old-fashioned high square ones. Unitarianism has been preached here for more than a century, and it has now been re-opened by Unitarians from the surrounding district. Connected with the chapel are a house and what was formerly a schoolroom, situated in the Priory, and now in the occupation of Mr. Reeve. The opening ceremony on Thursday consisted of a public service, conducted by the Rev. J. C. Street, of the Church of the Saviour, Birmingham, an excellent sermon being preached by the Rev. Joseph Wood, of the Old Meeting Church, Birmingham. There was a good congregation. Tea was served in the Town Hall. —After tea, Mr. Herbert New thanked the Rev. J. C. Street and the Rev. Joseph Wood for their kindness in conducting the service and preaching in the afternoon. —The Rev. J. C. Street replied, and expressed the hope that the Alcester people would not allow the venerable building to be closed again.—The Rev. Joseph Wood also replied, remarking that he never preached in a building more unique in its way and more interesting because of its associations than the chapel at Alcester, which ought no more to be touched than Westminster Abbey. He did not think a chapel in a place like Alcester could be revived on the basis of Unitarian propaganda; if good work was to be done it must be done simply from the religious point of view.—Mr. A. W. Worthington spoke a few words of congratulation on the success which had attended the efforts of those who had tried to re-open the chapel.— Mr. Herbert New next delivered an interesting address on the history of the building. As soon as the Act of Toleration was passed (in 1689) it became possible, he said, for those who dissented from the Church of England to meet together for the worship of God, and to hold places of worship for that purpose. He found from the records of the Alcester congregation that a congregation was worshipping in a house on the site of the present Meeting House in the year 1693—only five years after the passing of the Toleration Act—and no doubt 1693 was not the earliest date, because the congregation must have begun to gather some time before that, and as soon as the time came that it was lawful for Dissenters to worship, they proceeded to do so, and there was a worshipping assembly in Alcester of persons who called themselves Protestant Dissenters, and who held their property for the use of Protestant Dissenters for the worship of Almighty God—that was the beginning and end of the trust deed and of the history of the trust of the Alcester Meeting House. He thought he was right in saying that that Meeting House must have been the very first Dissenting Meeting House in Alcester. That it was a place of some importance appeared from the names of those who were trustees or members of the congregation, or both, in the early deeds which he had the opportunity of consulting. There was one minister there of the name of Joseph Porter, a man of learning and ability, who died in 1720, and who was minister of the congregation soon after its formation up to the year of his death. The chapel was built in 1724, and a tablet was put up to the Rev. Joseph Porter's memory. He could not account for the history of the Meeting House and its congregation between the building of the chapel and the next date that he came to, except that he found there was a renewal of the trust from time to time, and therefore the congregation was going on in a tolerably flourishing manner. From 1775 to 1784 the Rev. B. Evans was minister there; and in 1796 Benjamin Morris, who continued for some time. After him came a lay minister named Hancock, and a minute in the chapel books, dated about 1819, stated that the Rev. Timothy Davis was thanked for coming over from Evesham to conduct evening services, which he did for some time. A Mr. Warren was minister for nearly thirty years, up to 1864, when he resigned. From 1867 to 1869 the Midland Christian Union assisted the congregation, and in 1870 supplies were found out of the income from the endowments. Mr. Eastlake and Mr. Scott followed in 1872 and 1873, and from 1877 to 1882 Mr. Watton, a layman, conducted services, and in 1882 the chapel was closed.—Mr. Rudolph Davis next addressed the meeting, saying that the chapel was re-opened in no feeling of h stility to any other place of worship in the town. There was room enough in Alcester for another congregation; even if all the other churches in the town were filled (and he understood they were not) there was still room for another. —The Rev. A. E. O'Connor, the next speaker, stated that the first minister of his congregation at Cradley, the Rev. Josiah Bassett, who founded and took charge of it in 1704, was the son of a Mr. Bassett who was clergyman at Exhall, and who was ejected from his curacy at Exhall in 1662, the year in which the Act of Uniformity was passed, when all the clergymen of the Church, which till then had some right to call itself the Church of England, were forced to declare their unfeigned assent and consent to everything in the prayer book, and to use that book and that alone in their services, or to leave their livings. This Mr. Bassett obeyed his conscience rather than the iniquitous Act of Uniformity, and had therefore to leave Exhall; he became a Nonconformist, and his son founded the congregation of which he (Mr. O'Connor) was minister.—After a speech from the Rev. D. Davis the proceedings terminated.

OLDBURY.—The Twenty-first Annual Flower Service was held on Sunday, July 23rd. The attendance was large at both services, and the collections a great advance on last year. Mr. F. Watson (Wesleyan), of Aldridge, preached the evening sermon. The decorations, as usual, were chaste and profuse.

OLDBURY.—Mr. George Hartland, one of the Trustees of the Meeting House and an old member of the congregation, died on July 19th, after only twelve hours' illness, aged 68. The Minister referred to his death from the pulpit, and spoke of the admirable qualities which had enabled him to surmount difficulties in his early life, retain the affection of all his friends, and enjoy the only too short peaceful evening of life, esteemed by everybody.

To say well is good, but to do well is better;
Do well is the spirit, and say well the letter;
If do well and say well were fitted in one frame,
All were won, all were done, and got were all the gain.

Midland Church Calendar for August.

ATHERSTONE: Unitarian Chapel.
Minister: Rev. J. Howard, of Tamworth. Service at 3 p.m.

BIRMINGHAM: Church of the Messiah, Broad Street.
Ministers: Revs. Dr. Crosskey, 117, Gough Road; and James Crossley, 5, Wyndham Road. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special:

BIRMINGHAM: The Hurst Street Mission.
Minister: Rev. W. J. Clarke, 160, Pershore Road.
Services: 10-15, 2-45, and 6-30.
Special:

BIRMINGHAM: The Fazeley Street Mission.
Minister: Rev. T. Pipe, 59, Gt Brook Street. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special:

BIRMINGHAM: The Newhall Hill Church.
Minister: Rev. A. A. Charlesworth, Claremont Road. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special:

BIRMINGHAM: The Old Meeting Church.
Minister: Rev. Joseph Wood, 120, Gough Road, Edgbaston. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special: The Church will be closed on Sundays August 27th and September 3rd.

BIRMINGHAM: The Church of the Saviour.
Minister: The Rev. J. C. Street, 19, Charlotte Road, Edgbaston.
Services: 11 and 6-30.

BANBURY: Christ Church, Horsefair.
Minister: Rev. H. Hill, 5, Crouch Street. Service: Evening, 6-30.
Special:

COSELEY: The Old Meeting House.
Minister: Rev. Henry Eachus. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special:

CRADLEY: Netherend Chapel.
Minister: Rev. A. E. O'Connor. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special:

DUDLEY: The Old Meeting House.
Minister: Rev. A. H. Shelley. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special:

EVESHAM: Oak Street Meeting House.
Minister: Vacant. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special:

Midland Church Calendar for August.—*(Continued.)*

KIDDERMINSTER :
Minister : Rev. E. D. Priestley Evans. Services : 10-30 and 6-30.
Special :

KINGSWOOD : Kingswood Chapel, Hollywood.
Minister : Rev. J. Hardinge Matthews. Services : 11 and 6-30.
Special :

OLDBURY : Unitarian Meeting House.
Minister : Rev. Henry McKean, The Dingle, Oldbury. Services : 11 and 6-30.
Special :

SHREWSBURY : High Street Church.
Minister : Rev. E. Myers, F.G.S., Claremont Hill. Services : 11 and 6-30.
Special :

STOURBRIDGE : Presbyterian Chapel.
Minister : Rev. A. W. Timmis. Services : 11 and 6-30.
Special :

TAMWORTH : Cole Hill Chapel.
Minister : Rev. J. Howard, 17, Aldergate. Services : 11 and 6-30.
Special :

THE LYE : Unitarian Chapel.
Minister : Rev. I. Wrigley, B.A. Service : 6-30.
Special :

WALSALL : Unitarian Free Church.
Minister : Rev. Peter Dean, 3, Sandwell Street. Services : 11-15 and 6-30.
Special :

WEST BROMWICH : Lodge Road Chapel.
Minister : Rev. John Harrison, Jesson Street. Services : 11 and 6-30.
Special :

WHITCHURCH : Church of the Saviour, Highgate.
Minister : Rev. George Eyre Evans, 5, Mill Street.
Services : 11, 2-15 for Children, 6-30.
Special : August 30th, New Reading Room of the Highgate Men's Club opened by R. D. Holt, Esq., 6-30.

WOLVERHAMPTON : Unity Church, Snow Hill.
Minister : Rev. L G. Harris Crook, Oaklands Road. Services : 11 and 6-30.
Special :